

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T AMMAN 2147

EXDIS

E.9. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PFOR JO SA XF
SUBJECT: BADRAN VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA

1. WHILE WE HAVE NO DIRECT REPORTS OF RESULTS OF
PM BADRANS VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, FORMER PM
RIFAI TOLD ME THAT HE BELIEVED
VISIT HAD NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL. RIFAI SAID THAT
BADRAN HAD TOLD LOCAL SOURCES THAT VISIT HAD BEEN
POSITIVE AND THAT HE WAS HALF-WAY TO A SUCCESSFUL
CONCLUSION OF THE HAWK PAYMENT PROBLEM. IN RIFAIS
OPINION THAT MANS THAT SAUDIS HAVE SAID TO JORDAN
THAT "YOU CAN KEEP THE \$140, BUT DONT
EXPECT US TO HELP ANY MORE".

2. RIFAI REPORTED THAT SAUDIS HAD PLANTED STORY
IN KUWAITI PAPER AL SIYASSIYAH STATING THAT SAUDI
BANK GOVERNOR HAD CONSPIRED WITH GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN
TO EMBEZZLE \$140 MILLION FOR JORDAN. HE ALSO CLAIMS
THAT PRESENT GOVERNMENT WAS GRATLY AT FAULT IN NOT
HAVING TAKEN UP PROBLEM WITH SAUDIS. NOW THAT
GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN TOLD BY THE SAUDIS THAT A MISTAKE
WAS MADE IN SAUDI ARABIA, JORDAN HAS NO LEVERAGE TO
SETTLE THE PROBLEM AND JORDAN SERIOUSLY RISKS HAWK

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DEAL AND CONTINUING SAUDI ASSISTANCE OF ALL KINDS INCLUDING
REGULAR KHARTOUM AND RABAT SUBSIDIES.

3. FINALLY RIFAI, WHO HAS NOT LOVE FOR PRESENT
GOVERNMENT, SAID HE DID NOT SEE HOW BADRAN COULD
HAVE BEEN SO THOUGHTLESS AS TO HAVE GONE TO RIYADH
ON THE DAY JORDAN ANNOUNCED THE OPENING OF RELATIONS

WITH COMMUNIST CHINA. HE IS CERTAIN THAT SAUDIS WERE NEVER CONSULTED. GIVEN SAUDI TIES TO ROC AND THEIR DISLIKE FOR ALL COMMUNISTS HE DID NOT SEE HOW JORDAN COULD COME OF OF THIS DEAL AHEAD. HE ADDED (WITH AN ABVIOUS EYE TO HIS OWN FUTURE) THAT IT WILL TAKE A NEW GOVERNMENT MONTHS AND EVEN YEARS TO FIX THIS PROBLEM.

4. RIFAI THEN ADMITTED (WHEN I ASKED) THAT HE HAD TOYED WITH THE IDEA OF ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH THE PRC WHEN HE WAS PRIME MINISTER, ADDING THAT HE WOULD HAVE INSISTED ON LARGE PHOSPHATE SALES OF THE NEXT TEN YEARS AS THE PRICE FOR THE DEAL AND THAT HE WOULD HAVE CONSULTED SAUDI ARABIA BEFORE HE DID SO. BANK HE ALSO REMARKED THAT PRESENT GOVERNMENT ARE "SHORT TIMES" WORRIED ONLY ABOUT KEEPING THE \$140 MILLION AND LEAVING THE BUDGET ACCOUNT IN SURPLUS WHEN THEY DEPART OFFICE, LEAVING THE NEXT GOVERNMENT TO PICK UP THE PIECES.

5. COMMENT: RIFAI IS ANYTHING BUT AN IMPARTIAL OBSERVER, BUT HIS VIEWS ON THIS CAPER MIGHT BE UNFORTUNATELY CLOSER TO TRUTH THAN FALSEHOOD. ASIDE FROM THE QUESTION OF MOTIVATION THE HANDLING OF THIS ISSUE BY BADRAN, INCLUDING THE UNFORTUNATE JUXTAPOSITION OF ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH THE PRC ON HE SAME SAY AS HIS TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA SEEMS ALMOST PRE-ORDAINED TO MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR THE SAUDIS AND THE JORDANIANS. PICKERING

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